

1. (amended) A process for the recovery of lactic acid from an aqueous solution containing at least one water-soluble lactate salt and having a pH of about between 4 and 14, comprising the steps of:

a) contacting said aqueous solution with a cation exchanger which is at least partially in its acid form, said cation exchanger being water immiscible in both acid and salt form, whereby ion exchange is effected, protons are transferred from said cation exchanger to the aqueous solution to acidulate it and to form lactic acid therein and cations from said aqueous solution are bound by said cation exchanger to form a cations carrying cation exchanger;

b) reacting said cations carrying cation exchanger to convert it into a cation exchanger which is at least partially in its acid form and to a second product, which second product is basic and comprises the cation of said salt; and

c) recovering lactic acid from said lactic acid-containing acidulated aqueous solution.

34. (amended) A process for the recovery of lactic acid from an aqueous solution containing at least one water-soluble lactate salt and having a pH of about between 4 and 14, comprising the steps of:

a) contacting said aqueous solution with a cation exchanger which is at least partially in its acid form, said cation exchanger being water immiscible in both acid and salt form, whereby ion exchange is effected, protons are transferred from said cation exchanger to the